

**REMARKS**

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2 and 11-18. However, claims 1 and 3-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for anticipation by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness over WO 97/35939 as interpreted by U.S. Patent No. 6,261,357 to Egami et al. This rejection is traversed in view of the amendments to claims 1 and 3 and for the following reasons.

The substrate coated with a silica-containing film of the present invention is produced by a process which results in a low-density film with a low-dielectric constant having essentially no pores or voids of more than 10 nm in diameter. See paragraphs 95-99 of the specification. While Egami refers to a porous silica coating film with intergranular voids between fine silica particles as a film-forming component, there is no description of pores or voids attributable to the decomposition or vaporization of the readily decomposable resin used in the present invention, and no suggestion of controlling the average diameter of the pores or voids as in the present invention. Independent claims 1 and 3 have been amended to specify that the average diameter of pores or voids present in the low-density silica film is not more than 10 nm. Support therefor can be found in paragraphs 95-99. No new matter has been added.

In view of the amendments to claims 1 and 3, all of claims 1-18 are believed to define over the prior art and be in condition for allowance.

The specification has been amended to include the patent number for the parent case to this application.

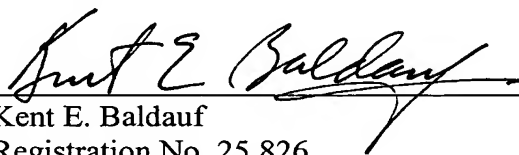
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In Reply to USPTO Correspondence of June 9, 2004  
Attorney Docket No. 1217-031246

Finally, the Examiner failed to initial the Form PTO/SB/08A (submitted on December 4, 2003) next to the two Japanese documents. Those documents, as well as English language abstracts thereof were submitted in the parent application (09/530,437) and are also discussed on page 2 of the application. Acknowledgment of consideration thereof is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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